

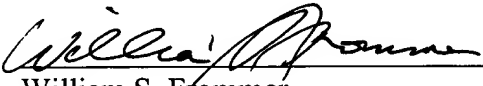
In the light of the accompanying Certified English Translation, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 1-14, all the claims in this application, have been rejected as allegedly being anticipated by Kimoto (U.S. Patent 6,792,577).

The present application is entitled to the Japanese priority filing date of July 2, 1999. This priority date antedates the June 20, 2000 U.S. filing date to which Kimoto is entitled. Enclosed herewith is a verified English translation of Japanese priority application 11-188874, from which it will be seen that claims 1-14 are fully supported by this Japanese priority application. In view of the earlier effective filing date of the present application, the Kimoto reference is not available as prior art with respect hereto. It is, therefore, requested that this reference be removed and that the rejection of claims 1-14 as being anticipated by Kimoto be withdrawn. See MPEP 201.15.

It is respectfully submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance; and an early notice to this effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Enc. - Certified English Translation  
of Priority Document